

**CLAIM(S)**

I claim:

- [0028] 1. A method of performing an abdominal crunch exercise comprising the steps of:
  - [0029] (a) placing an object on the anterior torso of a user while lying in a supine position, said object providing resistance to a compressive force;
  - [0030] (b) engaging the object with the upper thighs and the arms of the user; and
  - [0031] (c) contracting the abdominal muscles so as to attempt to compress the object between the upper thighs and the arms of the user.
- 10 [0032] 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the object is a compressible pad of material having oppositely disposed first and second surfaces for engagement by the arms and thighs of the user.
- 15 [0033] 3. An exercise device for aiding a user in the performance of an abdominal crunch exercise comprising:
  - [0034] (a) a first surface sized and oriented to engage each of the arms of a user while lying in a supine position;
  - [0035] (b) a second surface sized and oriented to engage each of the thighs of a user while lying in a supine position with the user's knees in a raised position;
  - [0036] (c) a resistance interacting between the first and second planar surfaces to resist movement of said surfaces toward each other as said user contracts the abdominal muscles.
- 20 [0037] 4. The exercise device of claim 1 wherein said resistance provides a resistive force that is proportional to the degree of movement of said first and second surfaces toward each other.
- 25 [0038] 5. The exercise device of claim 1 wherein said resistance comprises a pad of compressible material.
- 30 [0039] 6. A method of performing a crunch or crossover exercise for strengthening the abdominal muscles of a user comprising the steps of:
  - [0040] (a) providing a compressible and resilient pad having a substantially flat first

surface adapted to lie on the abdomen of a user while in a supine position, the pad having a second surface formed at a first obtuse angle to the first surface and a third surface formed at a second obtuse angle to the first surface;

5 [0041] (b) engaging the second surface with the arms and engaging the third surface with the upper thighs;

[0042] (c) contracting the abdominal muscles such that the arms and upper thighs push against said second and third surfaces thereby compressing the pad.

10 [0043] 7. The method of claim 6, step (a), further including the substeps of:  
[0044] (1) providing a void in an upper surface of the pad;  
[0045] (2) providing inserts for said void of materials having different densities and compressibility factors;  
[0046] (3) placing a selected one of said inserts into said void prior to performing steps (b) and (c).

15 [0047] 8. The method of claim 7 wherein the void comprises a substantially U-shaped void.

20 [0048] 9. An exercise device for providing resistance to a user in the performance of an abdominal crunch or crossover exercise while the user is lying supine, comprising a resilient and compressible pad of material having a first substantially planar surface for placement upon the abdomen of the user, a second surface extending at an obtuse angle to the first surface and sized and shaped to engage the upper thighs of the user while performing said crunch exercise, and a third surface extending at an obtuse angle to the first surface and sized and shaped to contact the arms of the user while performing a crunch or crossover exercise.

25 [0049] 10. The exercise device of claim 9 further including a top surface having a void for receiving inserts of material of different densities and compressibilities to thereby define the degree of resistance encountered by the user when performing said crunch exercise.

30 [0050] 11. The exercise device of claim 10 wherein said void portion is substantially U-shaped in cross section.

35 [0051] 12. The exercise device of claim 9 wherein said obtuse angle is in the range of

**100° to 120° relative to said first surface.**